Licensing Requirements

Licensure as a Registered or Practical Nurse

Colorado has a mandatory Nurse Practice Act which means that no one may practice professional (RN) or practical (PN) nursing without a Colorado license or temporary permit. There are two ways to become licensed, by examination and by endorsement.

Examination

You should apply for a license by examination if:

- You have completed a state approved professional nursing or practical nursing educational program and do not hold a license in another state or U.S. territory.
- You were educated outside the U.S. or its territories, and are not licensed in another state or territory. However, you must first contact the CGFNS) to request the credentials review titled Healthcare Profession and Science Course-by-Course Report.

For information and helpful resources regarding NCLEX and nursing exams, visit the <u>National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCBSN)</u> website.

Endorsement

You may apply for RN or LPN licensure by endorsement if you are or have been licensed as a registered nurse or practical nurse in another state or U.S. territory.

Licensure as a Retired Volunteer Nurse

A nurse holding a retired volunteer nursing license cannot accept payment for nursing care provided while in the possession of this license. A retired volunteer nursing license allows the retired nurse to engage in volunteer nursing care within the scope of the nurse's license.

You may apply for a retired volunteer nurse license if:

- You are at least 55 years of age; AND
- You currently hold a Colorado nursing license that is due to expire unless renewed; OR
- You have retired from the practice of nursing and are not currently engaged in the practice of nursing either full-time
 or part-time and have maintained licensure in good standing in any state or U.S. territory.

To apply for this type of license the applicant must sign a statement under penalty of perjury in which the applicant agrees not to receive payment for any nursing care provided while practicing with a retired volunteer nursing license.

The Board of Nursing retains full authority and jurisdiction to take disciplinary action against the licensee for violations of the Nurse Practice Act. Please see section 12-38-112.5 of the Nurse Practice Act for more information.

The application process will differ depending on what kind of license you hold.

- If you currently hold a Colorado RN or LPN license in **Active** status, you may change your license status to Retired/Volunteer at the time of renewal or by contacting Board staff to request the appropriate form.
- If you hold an RN or LPN license in **Expired** status, you may change your license status to Retired/Volunteer by completing a LPN Reinstatement Application or an RN Reinstatement Application.
- If you hold an RN or LPN license in a state **other than Colorado**, you may obtain a Retired/Volunteer license by completing an LPN Endorsement Application or an RN Endorsement Application.

Licensure as a Psychiatric Technician

Colorado licenses psychiatric technicians with separate licenses in two (2) specialty areas: care of the developmentally disabled and care of the mentally ill. Colorado has a mandatory psychiatric technician practice act which means that no one may practice as a psychiatric technician without a Colorado license.

If you are licensed as a psychiatric technician, you may be eligible for Colorado licensure by endorsement. Please contact the Board for more information.

You must complete a state approved psychiatric training program to be eligible to take the licensing examination. Please contact the Board for more information.

* Important Information Concerning LPT Applications and Exams. As part of the application process, and in accordance with Board rules, the Office of Licensing will require that applicants for LPT licensure submit an official transcript in a sealed envelope with their application for licensure. Application deadline and examination dates for 2011-2013 are listed below. Applications received after the deadline will be processed and scheduled for the next available exam.

	LPT Exam Dates:	
Application Deadline: December 14, 2012 June 14, 2013	2013	Examination: January 16, 2013 July 17, 2013
Application Deadline: December 13, 2013 June 13, 2014	2014	Examination: January 15, 2014 July 16, 2014

Certification as a Nurse Aide

Colorado has a mandatory Nurse Aide Practice Act, which means that no one may practice as a Certified Nurse Aide without obtaining certification. Certification within 4 months of obtaining employment as a nurse aide is required to practice in a nursing home or a home health agency. Certification is required prior to obtaining employment in a nursing pool or registry; there is no four (4) month allowance to obtain the certification. There are two ways to become certified: by examination and by endorsement.

Examination

You may apply for certification as a Nurse Aide by examination if:

- You are not on a nurse aide registry in another state but you have completed a state approved nurse aide training program.
- You have completed a nurse aide training program in Colorado that has been approved by the Board.
- You are a Licensed Psychiatric Technician and wish to become a Certified Nurse Aide.
- You are a nursing student and have successfully completed five (5) semester credits of nursing fundamentals.
- You are a foreign-trained nurse; you may be eligible to take the State nurse aide certification exam. Please contact
 the Board for more information.

Examination materials and instructions can be found on Pearson VUE's website.

Endorsement

You may apply for certification as a nurse aide by endorsement if you are on a state nurse aide registry in another state and are eligible to work as a nurse aide in nursing homes in that state.

Special or Student Permit for Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse

The Board may issue a permit to practice as a practical or professional nurse for a period not to exceed two years (or as determined by the Board) to any person from another state or territory of the United States or a foreign country who is in this state for special training or for observation of nursing educational programs, providing such person is currently licensed to practice as a nurse in the state, territory, or country of residency.

Requirements for receiving a Special or Student Permit to practice in the State of Colorado are outlined in the Nurse Practice Act (specifically 12-38-115) and Chapter I of the Board's rules.

Inactive Licensure Status — Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for inactive status?

Colorado licensed LPNs and RNs who hold active, un-restricted licensure without discipline and whose primary legal residence is Colorado or a non-compact state.

How do I inactive my license?

Beginning in January 2009, the application to inactivate an active LPN or RN license will be available on-line in the Professionals section of the Board's web site www.dora.colorado.gov/professions/nursing. Download and print the application and submit it with any required documentation.

Once I submit the application to inactivate my license, how long will it take to process?

It will take approximately fourteen days to process **completed** applications. Incomplete applications or those applications requiring further information and/or special review will take longer to process.

Will I have to submit a fee to inactivate my license?

No. No application fees are required to inactivate an active license.

Will I be required to renew my license once it has been inactivated?

Yes. You will be required renew an inactive license every two years, during the same renewal period as active RN or LPN licenses. The renewal fee will be at a reduced rate, and will be determined by the Division of Professions and Occupations annually.

Will I receive a renewal notice if my license is inactive?

Yes, as long as you ensure that the Board of Nursing has your current address on file. To check to see if the Board has your current address, or to make address changes visit Online Services.

Will I be able to practice nursing if my license is in an inactive status?

No. Practicing nursing as defined in sections 12-38-103(9) and (10) C.R.S. without a current, **active**, un-restricted license in Colorado, or a valid multi-state license is a violation of the Nurse Practice Act and nurses who practice on an inactive license are subject to discipline from the Board.

May I still use the title LPN, RN, licensed practical nurse, or professional nurse if my license is inactive?

Yes. You may still use the titles but you may not actively practice nursing.

What are the requirements to reactivate an inactive license?

Submit the reactivation application, current reactivation fee, and all required supporting documentation as outlined in the application. Note: Nurses whose license have been inactive for two (2) years or longer will be required to demonstrate continued competency as outlined in Board Policy 10-03.

Where can I get the application to reactivate an inactive license?

You can download and print the application by going to the Professionals section of the Board of Nursing web site at www.dora.colorado.gov/professions/nursing.

How long will it take to process my reactivation application once I have submitted it to the Office of Licensing? It will take approximately fourteen days to process completed applications. Incomplete applications or those applications requiring further information and/or special review will take longer to process.

Are there continuing education unit (C.E.U.) requirements to maintain inactive licensure or to reactivate an inactive license?

No. However, the Board does have continued competency requirements for those whose license has been inactive for two (2) years or longer and want to reactivate. See Board Policy 10-03 for continued competency requirements.

If my license is in Retired/Volunteer nursing license status may I change the status for inactive status?

Yes. However, with a "retired status" the nurse is allowed to practice on a voluntary basis (without remuneration) and an "inactive status" the nurse cannot practice nursing even on a volunteer basis.

If my license is inactive may I change the status to retired/volunteer status if I meet the requirements to hold a retired/volunteer license?

Yes. However, the nurse will have to demonstrate competency as set forth in Board Policy 10-03. "Retired" status allows the nurse to practice, only on a volunteer basis, where an "inactive" nurse cannot practice and therefore cannot maintain current competency.

What happens if I do not renew my inactive license?

All licenses (whether active or inactive) not renewed after the standard 60 day grace period will be expired. Those licenses with expired licenses who wish to resume the active practice of nursing in Colorado are required to reinstate their expired license to active status. The same continued competency requirements apply upon submission of a reinstatement application. See Board Policy 10-03.

If I am currently facing discipline from the Board may I inactivate my license in lieu of accepting Board action?

No. The nurse is not allowed to avoid disciplinary action by changing the status of his or her license to "inactive."

If I am changing my primary legal residence to another compact state may I inactivate my Colorado LPN or RN license so that I can maintain licensure in Colorado?

No. The rules of the multi-state nurse licensure compact require licensees to maintain licensure in their state of primary legal residence. Upon applying for and receiving licensure in another compact state your Colorado license will be expired. You cannot maintain inactive licensure in Colorado as long as you legally reside in another compact state.

If I am changing my primary legal residence to another non-compact state may I inactivate my Colorado LPN or RN license so that I maintain licensure in Colorado?

Yes. If your primary legal residence is a non-compact license you may inactivate your Colorado LPN or RN license and it will be designated as a single-state inactive license. *Reminder:* You will be required to renew your inactive license every two years at a reduced renewal fee.